

MELES MONTANUS RICHARDSON, 1829, AND MELES JEFFERSONII HARLAN, 1825: PROPOSED SUPPRESSION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS (MAMMALIA, CARNIVORA) Z.N.(S.) 1639

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The purpose of this proposal is to request the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to use its plenary powers to suppress the species-group name *montanus* Richardson, 1829 (*Fauna Boreali-Americana* (1) : 41), published in the combination *Meles montanus*, and concomitantly to ensure that the name *berlandieri* Baird, 1858 (*Mammals of North America* : 205), published in the combination *Taxidea berlandieri*, shall be conserved as a species-group name; and, furthermore, to suppress the species-group name *jeffersonii* Harlan, 1825 (*Fauna Americana* . . . : 309), published in the combination *Meles jeffersonii*, and concomitantly to ensure that the name *neglecta* Mearns, 1891 (*Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.* 3 : 250, June 5), published in the combination *Taxidea americana neglecta*, shall be conserved as a species-group name.

2. In 1651, Francisco Hernández (*Nova plantarum, animalium et mineralium mexicanorum historia a Francisco Hernández . . . [Rerum medicarum Novae-Hispaniae thesaurus . . .]*, Rome, p. 6) described a Mexican mammal then commonly known as Quauhpecotli or Texon [=coati?], and referred to it as "Mele montano". Its description fits the North American badger well, excepting mention of a long tail (which, incidentally, is rather long in the Mexican subspecies). Its description also fits the coati, *Nasua narica* (Linnaeus), excepting mention of dark pelage. In 1829, Richardson in his account of the North American badger mentions briefly the description of "Fernandez" (=Hernández), uses the name "*Meles montanus*," and publishes a brief description ("long tail"). The name *montanus* Richardson is, therefore, available, and the type-locality, mentioned by Hernández, is Mexico.

3. The description of Hernández, pertaining to badger or coati, results in the name being used arbitrarily. Richardson applied the name to a badger ("*Meles*"), although he stated that the animal probably belonged to a different genus.

4. In 1858, Baird named and described *Taxidea berlandieri* from a type-specimen taken at Llano Estacado, present day Texas; the taxon (subspecies) to which this name applies has been recognized continuously since then under Baird's name, and has been often termed the Mexican badger. If the name of Richardson applies to a badger, both *berlandieri* Baird and *montanus* Richardson apply to one and the same subspecies.

5. If the name *montanus* Richardson, 1829, pertains to a coati, probably the name *Nasua narica molaris* Merriam, 1902, would be supplanted, perhaps the name *Nasua narica narica* (Linnaeus) would become the senior synonym of *montanus* Richardson, or some other disruptive change might be made necessary.

6. In 1950, Schantz (*Jour. Mamm.* 31 : 90, February 21) named and described *Taxidea taxus montana*, a subspecies of badger from the state of Montana. If *montanus* Richardson, 1829, is referred to *Taxidea*, the name of Schantz is an

active, junior secondary homonym, of *Taxidea montana* (Richardson), 1829, and must be rejected in favor of its earlier synonym.

7. On the basis of comparisons of numerous badgers from North America, I regard the populations known as *montana* Schantz to be inseparable from those currently known by the older name *Taxidea americana neglecta* (= *Taxidea taxus neglecta*) Mearns, 1891.

8. However, *Meles jeffersonii* (= *Taxidea taxus jeffersonii*) Harlan, 1825, is even an older name than *neglecta* Mearns, and is its senior synonym, although it has been listed as a synonym of the name of the nominate subspecies for more than 100 years (Baird, *ibid.*, p. 202, 1858; Hall and Kelson, *The mammals of North America*: 928, 1959). The type-locality of *jeffersonii* is the "open plains of Columbia," a region within the geographic range of *neglecta*. The name *jeffersonii* is based by Harlan only on a description of Lewis and Clark.

9. By the automatic provisions of the Code, therefore (excluding from consideration the as yet unsettled *nomen oblitum* clause), the name *montana* Schantz, must be rejected in favor of *jeffersonii* (Harlan), and the long-used name *neglecta* Mearns, 1891, is unavailable as a junior synonym of *jeffersonii* (Harlan), which name has not been used for 100 years. Furthermore, the well-known name *berlandieri* Baird, 1858, used continuously for more than 100 years, is possibly also unavailable as a junior synonym of a name (*montanus* Richardson, 1829) of a mammal (1) which is quite possibly not a badger, (2) which has no type specimen, (3) which has an imprecise type locality, and (4) which has been overlooked for more than 130 years.

10. As the names of taxa of badgers, *neglecta* Mearns and *berlandieri* Baird have been used continuously for 73 and 106 years, respectively, and the latter name has appeared in especially many scientific and popular writings, change of these names would result in tremendous confusion. Taxonomic confusion would probably also result if the name *montanus* Richardson is referred to the coatis, *Nasua*.

11. For the reasons listed above, I now request the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy:
 - (a) the specific name *montana* Richardson, 1829, as published in the binomen *Meles montanus*;
 - (b) the specific name *jeffersonii* Harlan, 1825, as published in the binomen *Meles jeffersonii*;
- (2) to place the following specific names on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology:
 - (a) *berlandieri* Baird, 1858, as published in the binomen *Taxidea berlandieri*;
 - (b) *neglecta* Mearns, 1891, as published in the combination *Taxidea americana neglecta*;
- (3) to place the specific names suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology.